

### IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended) Apparatus for maintaining a sliding window sash at an intended position along an axis perpendicular to a plane defined by a frame within which the sash slides, said frame having an inwardly facing surface which, when the sash is in the intended position, is opposite an outwardly facing surface of the sash, comprising:
  - (a) means for defining an elongate[d] trough, the elongate trough adapted to be disposed in a portion [in the inwardly facing surface] of the frame, said trough adapted to extend[ing] generally parallel to the plane defined by the frame and generally in a direction of intended sliding of the sash;
  - (b) a blade defining a blade plane;
  - (c) [means for mounting said] blade mounting structure adapted to mount the blade within a cavity in the sash [oriented with the plane defined by said blade generally parallel to the plane defined by] said blade adapted to be disposed generally parallel to the plane defined by the frame, said blade disposed for pivotal movement between a first position, wherein said blade is adapted to be retracted within the outwardly facing surface of the sash, and a second position, wherein said blade is extended into said trough;
  - (d) means for normally biasing said blade to said second position thereof; and
  - (e) means for selectively retracting said blade to said first position thereof.
2. (Original) Apparatus in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said blade, when in said second position thereof, is extended fully into said trough to engage a bottom thereof.
3. (Original) Apparatus in accordance with Claim 2 wherein said bottom of said trough has a slot formed therethrough at a location such that, when the sash is in a closed position, said blade is adjacent said slot.
4. (Original) Apparatus in accordance with Claim 3, wherein said blade is further disposed and biased for pivotal movement to a third position extending into and through said slot.

5. (Original) Apparatus in accordance with Claim 4 wherein said blade includes an edge angled such that, as the sash is moved from a closed position to an open position, the angled edge engages an end of said slot and facilitates retraction of said blade from said third position thereof to said second position thereof.

6. (Original) Apparatus in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said blade pivots about an axis, said means for biasing comprising a spring rotatably urging said blade about said axis outwardly through and away from said outwardly facing surface of the sash.

7. (Amended) Apparatus in accordance with Claim 6 wherein said means for retracting comprises a linearly moving actuator operatively connected to said blade to overcome, as said actuator is moved, said means for biasing and ~~rotate~~ rotating said blade in a direction opposite that in which said spring rotatably urges said blade.

8. (Amended) Apparatus in accordance with Claim 7 wherein said linearly moving actuator includes a wire yoke attached to said blade, a length of cord attached to said yoke and extending away therefrom, and ~~drive~~ driving means for drawing said length of cord inwardly with respect to said outwardly facing surface of said sash to rotate said blade against said means for biasing.

9. (Amended) Apparatus in accordance with Claim 1 further comprising an end plate assembly including a face plate adapted to be mounted generally flush with the outwardly facing surface of the sash and a pair of generally parallel tabs extending inwardly from said face plate, said tabs having facing surfaces, each facing surface mounting a stub axle, substantially coaxial with a stub axle on the facing surface of the other tab, extending toward the tab opposite the tab to which the stub axle is mounted, and wherein said blade has, formed therethrough, an aperture shaped and sized to receive therein said stub axles, each of opposite sides of said blade having defined therein a ramp surface positioned such that said blade can be inserted between distal ends of said stub axles and urged increasingly inwardly between said distal ends so that said

ramp surfaces urge said distal ends apart until said distal ends become registered with said aperture.

10. (Amended) Apparatus for maintaining a sliding window sash at an intended position along an axis perpendicular to a plane defined by a frame within which the sash slides, said frame having, when the sash is in the intended position, opposed inwardly facing surfaces opposite corresponding outwardly facing surfaces of the sash, comprising:

(a) means for defining an elongate[d] trough adapted to be disposed in each inwardly facing surface of the frame, each of said troughs adapted to extend[ing] generally parallel to the plane defined by the frame and generally in a direction of intended sliding of the sash;

(b) a pair of blades defining a generally common plane;

(c) means for mounting each of said blades adapted to be disposed within a corresponding cavity in the sash oriented with the generally common plane [defined by said blades] adapted to be disposed generally parallel to the plane defined by the frame, each of said blades being disposed for pivotal movement between a first position, wherein the blade is adapted to be retracted within a corresponding outwardly facing surface of the sash, and a second position, wherein each of said blades is extended into a corresponding trough [in an inwardly facing surface of the frame opposite an outwardly facing surface of the sash within which the cavity in which the blade is mounted is formed];

(d) means for normally biasing said blades to said second positions thereof; and

(e) means for selectively retracting said blades to said first positions thereof.

11. (Original) Apparatus in accordance with Claim 10 wherein said means for retracting includes means for simultaneously moving said blades from said second positions thereof to said first positions thereof.

12. (Original) Apparatus in accordance with Claim 11 wherein said means for simultaneously moving said blades comprises a unitary assembly for concurrently retracting said blades.

Please add the following claims:

13. (New) The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said means for defining said elongate trough includes a recess portion formed in a balance tube assembly.
14. (New) The apparatus in accordance with claim 13, wherein the balance tube assembly further includes at least one slot formed within the recessed portion.
15. (New) The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, further comprising at least one flexible element coupled with at least one blade.
16. (New) The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein the means for selectively retracting said blade is coupled to the blades at a first location, the blades pivotally moveable about a second location, and the first location is offset from the second location.
17. (New) The apparatus in accordance with claim 10, wherein said means for defining said elongate trough includes a recessed portion formed in a balance tube assembly.
18. (New) The apparatus in accordance with claim 10, wherein the balance tube assembly further includes at least one slot formed within the recessed portion.
19. (New) The apparatus in accordance with claim 10, further comprising at least one flexible element coupled with at least one blade.
20. (New) The apparatus in accordance with claim 10, wherein said blades have a non-uniform thickness.